

## History of Artists' Use of Film - Chuck Kleinhans

Cinema was one of the first modern arts to be based in a new technological apparatus: photochemical, mechanical, and optical. While rapidly expanding into the commercial entertainment market, cinema was also of great interest to artists seeking new possibilities for expression and communication. This discussion will highlight some moments in the 1920s of intense radical aesthetic and social activity in media arts, and its continuation later in the 20th century. My central thesis is that new forms do not simply arise from innovative technological possibilities or ahistorical stylistic evolution, but often often emerges from the needs and demands of new social groups for expressive forms to deal with their social/political/historical reality. Work by Maholy-Nagy, Richter, Vertov, and recent work by feminist, gay, and African American artists.

### Reading:

Murray Smith, "Modernism and the avant-gardes," The Oxford Guide to Film Studies, ed. John Hill and Pamela Church-Gibson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp 395-412.